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Walker's Ex-Partner Says Agency Used Lie Tests for Sailor Clients

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NORFOLK, June 11 — Sailors trying to clear themselves of drug charges often went to the detective agency run by John A. Walker Jr., the man accused of recruiting spies for the Soviet Union, his employees say.

The company, Confidential Reports Inc. of Virginia Beach, Va., gave sailors polygraph, or lie-detector, tests that they could offer to counter the findings in the Navy's spot checks for drug use, the employees said.

Some Government officials said they were concerned that Mr. Walker could have used his knowledge of the sailors' lives to win their cooperation in espionage. A senior official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Norfolk said, however, that agents here had not pursued this aspect of the case.

As the investigation of Mr. Walker continues, officials are trying to determine the extent to which Mr. Walker's business activities and travels were a cover for what the Government says was espionage.

A lawyer for Laurie Robinson, Mr. Walker's partner in the detective agency, said today that his client might have been an unwitting courier.

"There is no doubt that while accompanying him to certain locations, she performed in some instances tasks that were part of a Soviet contact," Mr. Drescher said. "She was at certain locations and would perhaps deliver an envelope to another party." Mr. Drescher added that Mrs. Robinson was not suspected of complicity in any spying.

Mr. Drescher said some of these contacts took place while Mrs. Robinson and Mr. Walker went to other cities to investigate cases.

Private investigators in the Norfolk area said the purchase of lie-detector tests by sailors was not unusual. The Navy gives urinalysis exams to thousands of sailors each year, and the tests sometimes show a "false positive." One piece of evidence sometimes offered in appeals is a polygraph examination in which the accused denies ever having taken drugs.

A catalogue of evidence seized by the

F.B.I. from the offices of Confidential Reports suggested the agency performed numerous lie detector examinations. The filing cabinets, according to the F.B.I., contained eight files marked "polygraphs." Elsewhere in the office, there was a book entitled "polygraph monthly log, 1984-85."

Mrs. Robinson said in an interview that the company had given lie detector tests to accused sailors. Pamela K. Carroll, a former employee, said through her lawyer that the tests were given to "a large number of people in connection with the drug situation."

Partner Doubts Theory

Mr. Walker did not hold a state license to perform polygraph tests. Most of the exams given by his company were administered by Carla Himler of Virginia Beach, Va., who said she had been hired by Mr. Walker to administer tests over several years.

Mrs. Himler declined to discuss her work, saying state law barred her from discussing the results of lie detector tests.

Mrs. Robinson, who said she was not

aware of any espionage activities by Mr. Walker before his arrest, expressed doubt that he used the tests to recruit spies. "He wasn't even here when the exams took place," she said. "He stayed completely out of that end of the business. He could have cared less about it."

A Navy spokesman in Norfolk said he could not comment on the Walker case.

Mrs. Robinson said she had bought out Mr. Walker's share of the business and was trying to keep it afloat as her own detective agency. Her lawyer said that this effort had been complicated by an tax lien.

Mrs. Robinson said that several of the agency's old clients had phoned to offer support. "It's really to soon to tell what effect all this will have on the business," she said. "I have a very positive attitude."

The F.B.I. has already charged that Mr. Walker recruited both friends and family members. Those charged with espionage in the case include his son, his brother and a close friend Jerry Whitworth, all connected with the Navy at one time.